2 Thessalonians 1:3-4 - 3 We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brethren, as is only fitting, because your faith is greatly enlarged, and the love of each one of you toward one another grows ever greater; 4 therefore, we ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure. NASU

A. 3 We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brethren, as is only fitting – Here Paul gives God the glory for the progress of the Thessalonians faith. It “is only fitting,” if Paul is to commend them that He recognize the source of the blessing and privilege, and so he affirms “We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brethren.” Notice it is “we,” that Paul, as well as Timothy and Silas are thankful together for what God has worked among them. When we see the good graces of God abounding in others, we should always give the glory to God for the great thing He has done, even as we rejoice with and commend others for the diligence in the faith.

B. because your faith is greatly enlarged, and the love of each one of you toward one another grows ever greater; 4 therefore, we ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure – Notice here the specific things that Paul is both commending them and thanking God for, that “your faith is greatly enlarged, and the love of each one of you toward one another grows ever greater,” and also “your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure.” See here the daily goal we strive for as Christians, that we may have “enlarged faith” and “abounding love.” It is remarkable to note, that after the visit of Timothy and the delivery of the 1st Thessalonian letter, that Paul is still greatly encouraged by the “faith” and “love” of the Thessalonians. Whereas Paul had commended them for their faith and love in 1st Thessalonians, now he says that both have increased. So much so, that he is still making a boast of them, “we ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God.” It is remarkable that Paul mentions this in both letters as a distinguishing mark of this young church.

1 Thessalonians 1:2-3 - 2 We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention of you in our prayers; 3 constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father, NASB

In these statements, Paul both properly honors God for His grace and power at work in them, and commends and encourages them. See here that the Thessalonian church, at the time of the writing of the 2nd letter, is still a model church of diligent faith and abounding love. Paul rejoices at their progress saying, “your faith is greatly enlarged, and the love of each one of you toward one another grows ever greater,” the very things Paul had been praying for them (1 Thes 1:2). Notice he commends each and every believer for the way the love “one another.” Moreover, their great faith is abounding during a time of severe persecution, so Paul adds, “your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure.” Paul had mentioned this suffering in the 1st letter as well.

1 Thessalonians 1:6 - 6 You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit, NASU

1 Thessalonians 2:14 - 14 For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea, for you also endured the same sufferings at the hands of your own countrymen, even as they did from the Jews, NASB

It is remarkable that now at the time of writing the 2nd letter, they are still undergoing serious persecution, as the following verses tells us. Nevertheless, not only do they endure, but these Thessalonians thrive in the midst of this severe treatment, described here as “persecutions and afflictions.” Remember that this young church had been an “example” to all the other churches of their great commitment to evangelism, in which they had “sounded forth the word of the